

## Message Text

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21 15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NEA-10 AF-10 EUR-25 DRC-01

( ISO ) W

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R 210620Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2045

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6346

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM STATEMENT ON US ALERT

REF: CANBERRA 6325

1. TEXT OF DRAMATIC PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE NOVEMBER 20  
BETWEEN WHITLAM AND SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK  
(REFTEL) SHOWS WHITLAM MADE MORE COMPLETE AND SATISFACTORY  
CORRECTION THAN REPORTED REFTEL OF HIS EARLIER OFFENSIVE COMMENT.

2. WHITLAM REPLIED AS FOLLOWS TO PEACOCK'S CRITICAL STATEMENT:  
"...FIRST, HE MENTIONED MY SOMEWHAT ABRUPT REPLY TO A  
QUESTION WHICH RAISED SOME SUBJECTS ON WHICH THE QUESTIONER  
KNEW QUITE WELL THAT HE WOULD GET NO REPLY FROM ME ANY MORE THAN  
HE WOULD HAVE GOT ONE FROM ANY OF MY PREDECESSORS. IT WAS  
ABOUT THE UNITED STATES ALERT. AT THE TIME I HAD NOT STUDIED DR.  
KISSINGER'S STATEMENT. I HAVE SINCE STUDIED IT. I ACCEPT HIS  
STATEMENT. MY FOREIGN MINISTER (SENATOR WILLESEE) HAS ALREADY MADE  
CLEAR THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR DR.  
KISSINGER'S EFFORTS. I NEED MERELY ADD THAT THE FOLLOWING DAY I,  
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MYSELF PRAISED DR. KISSINGER'S EXTRAORDINARILY SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE

IN BRINGING TOGETHER, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1948, EGYPT AND ISRAEL IN THE SAME PLACE AT THE SAME TABLE. I AM SECOND TO NO ONE IN THE WORLD IN MY ADMIRATION FOR THE EFFORTS THAT DR. KISSINGER HAS MADE IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD ..."

WHITLAM PROCEEDED TO DISCUSS FAILURE OF USG TO CONSULT OR PROVIDE ADVANCE NOTICE OF ALERT AT NORTHWEST CAPE.

3. UNDER PRESSURE AGAIN DURING PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION PERIOD NOVEMBER 21, WHITLAM MADE CLEAR HE HAD NOT RECEIVED LETTER FROM DR. KISSINGER (REFTEL PARA 3) REGARDING SUPPLY OF US ARMS TO ISRAEL. WHITLAM SAID US AMBASSADOR HAD DELIVERED LETTER FROM DR. KISSINGER OCTOBER 20 PRAISING CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF SIR LAURENCE MCINTYRE AS PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THERE HAD BEEN NO OTHER LETTER, WHITLAM SAID, AND PEACOCK WAS MISINFORMED. WHITLAM ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT AT LIBERTY TO RELEASE TEXT OF HIS EXCHANGE WITH DR. KISSINGER BUT WOULD SEEK SECRETARY'S PERMISSION TO DO SO IF PARLIAMENT SO DESIRED. HE WAS NOT REQUESTED TO RELEASE THE TEXT.

4. I AM SPEAKING BEFORE MELBOURNE PRESS CLUB TODAY AT LUNCH AND AGAIN THIS EVENING (OFF THE RECORD) BEFORE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. I WILL TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS CHRONOLOGY OF MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND MILITARY ALERT, AND TO PLACE US POLICY AND DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE. SINCE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PRESS INTEREST IN THE LACK OF ADVANCE NOTICE TO AUSTRALIA OF OUR MILITARY ALERT AT NORTHWEST CAPE, I WILL ALSO DEAL WITH THIS SUBJECT. I INTEND TO EMPHASIZE THAT

A. URGENCY OF CRISIS REQUIRED IMMEDIATE NSC RECOMMENDATION AND PRESIDENTIAL DECISION;

B. ALERT WAS MADE PUBLIC QUICKLY, AND ESPECIALLY

C. A WORLDWIDE ALERT OF US FORCES HAS LITTLE RELEVANCE TO THE STATUS OF A NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION.

5. AUSTRALIAN PRESS NOVEMBER 21 TREATS WHITLAM'S NOVEMBER 20 STATEMENT AS AN OUTRIGHT RETRACTION OF AN CONFIDENTIAL

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EARLIER GAFFE. WHITLAM HAS GONE A LONG WAY TO MAKE AMENDS FOR HIS UNFORTUNATE AND IMPULSIVE COMMENT OF NOVEMBER 8. IT IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO REBUILD CONFIDENCE.

WHITLAM HAS FELT THE DISAPPROVAL OF HIS OWN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WAS, I BELIEVE, SHAKEN BY THE HEAT OF US REACTION. I HOPE THIS EXPERIENCE WILL HAVE SOME LASTING SALUTARY EFFECT. AS AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT, WHITLAM REPORTEDLY REVERSED GOA POSITION ON PARTICIPATION

IN SPOKANE FAIR SO AS TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL  
OFFENSE TO US JUST NOW.  
GREEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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